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PARATUBERCULOSIS: BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURES FOR AN EFFECTIVE CONTROL AND RISK ASSESSMENT IN ITALY

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Abstract

Paratuberculosis (also known as Johne's disease), a chronic enteritis affecting mainly ruminants, is caused by *Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis* (MAP). The disease is spread worldwide and causes important economic losses to the zootechnic sector. Moreover, MAP has been suspected to be involved in the aetiology of some human diseases, thus representing a potential zoonotic agent.

Since the recognition of IZSLER as National reference Centre in 2003 and as WOAH Reference Laboratory in 2022, three pillars of health policy have been pursued: diagnosis, education, and research.

1. Diagnosis includes standardization and validation of direct and indirect analytical methods and provides yearly proficiency tests for all the Italian laboratories.

2. Education involves veterinary practitioners, farmers and other stakeholders through organization of conferences and courses, and dissemination of information

- by brochures, websites, movies.
- 3. Research includes field surveys in both domestic and wild animals, molecular epidemiology studies and food research in relation to the potential zoonotic aspects of MAP.



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